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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Pascal Ricard
Ken Gagne

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->From the Editor's Keyboard
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

Okay, I'm officially on vacation! Time to sit back, feet up, and just take in a deep breath and relax! I have lots of plans for the next couple of weeks - plenty of yard work (16 more yards of loam to lay down to finish off putting in the lawn, get the pool opened, gardening, and more. I hope to get in some golfing, some work inside the house, and plenty of relaxing! I can taste those cold beers now!

Not much else going on here lately. Most of the work-related stress is over, at least for the present. The new budget has been finished and turned in to our VP. Might have some changes to make later on, but for now that monster is done. Just anticipating this time off has helped get me in a better frame of mind! Who can blame me, other than Joe!

So, I'll be brief this week - I won't rub it in too much. I'm hoping that the weather stays about the same as it has this week, but with more sun. I'll take the temperature in the 60's and 70's any time!

Until next time...

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PhotoTip 3.0

Hi all,

PhotoTip 3.0 is available.

The first goal of this program to manage digital cameras as best as possible. It is now also a very good images manager (listing, small retouching...). Therefore it become an indispensable tool for all Atari users.

PhotoTip webpage (in French):

<http://www.europe-shareware.org/atari/logiciels/phototip.html>

Bye,

P. Ricard (ES)

--

Europe Shareware <http://www.europe-shareware.org>

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I'm kind of under the weather this week. I've got an ear infection that's making me kind of woosie.... Is that a word?... Well, anyway, I don't feel well. But you know how it is.

At any rate, I don't feel exactly up to snuff. My telescope mirror grinding project is at a stand-still, I missed half a day of work, and I keep getting the seasick kind of feeling when I turn around too fast. All because I've got an ear infection.

Luckily, computer work with a laptop doesn't require too much acrobatic ability. Heck, if that was the case I wouldn't be able to use a computer at all.

Well, since my ear hasn't healed up in the past fifteen minutes, let's get on with the news and STuff from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
=====

Chris Martin asks a question about an OS that is near and dear to my heart... Linux:

"I was wondering if there was anyone out there who has installed Debian Linux 2.2 on an Atari TT030, and who has managed to get Xwindows working on the stock Atari video hardware. If so, can you let me know how to do this?

Since I have installed Linux on my TT, several people have asked how did I get Xwindows working. Well, I didn't, and after messing with it for a few days, it doesn't seem like it is too easy to do. If anyone has modelines for the XF86Config file that work, that would also be helpful."

Dr. Uwe Seimet tells Chris:

"You don't need any modelines for the Atari because the frame buffer device is used. Most of the data in XF86Config that deals with monitor settings is not relevant for the TT."

Last week there was a discussion about how to get a 1040 STf to display on a television. This week Geoff Phillips posts:

"Just in case someone wants to know, I managed to get the beast wired to the television, using the RGB. The details are:-

- 1) The SCART needs sync on the composite input.
- 2) The horizontal and vertical sync from the ST connect to each other with a pair of 330 Ohm resistors, and the point at which those meet is tapped off to pretend to be a composite sync, and off to pin 20 of the SCART, the red green and blue and grounds going directly from the appropriate pins.

[If you just use horizontal sync, you get a rolling picture, but otherwise ok.]

So..

ST vert sync - |--330R-|---|||SCART composite In |||-330R--ST horiz sync.

Gives a sharp image, no glitches. Don't blame me if it doesn't work! (but does for me).

Thanks to those who offered assistance, feel free to add it to FAQs. I can't recall now where I gleamed the bit of information about the 330Rs, perhaps nestled inside a Dejanews posting."

Hallvard Tangeraas tells Geoff:

"How about making a simple circuit diagram picture (or ASCII drawing) as it's all too easy to misunderstand textual explanations when it comes to stuff like this (or maybe I'm just too lazy to study stuff like this... ;-)

In any case it would be very useful for people who just quickly want the thing made.

I seem to recall something about resistors in a discussion regarding use of PC type VGA monitors - could you have taken it from there?"

Iggy Drougge tells Hallvard:

"They're certainly present in ST SCART cables. 150 Ohm."

Mike Freeman asks for help with Spin!, the CD-ROM driver:

"I just thought I would try out Spin! for curiosity sake. However, I can't get it to recognize my CD-RW drive (Yamaha). CD-Lab doesn't seem to recognize it, either. Both act as if the drive doesn't even exist in the SCSI chain. CBHD seems to see that it's there, though, so my guess is that it isn't supported by Spin or CD-Lab. Can anyone confirm this? I have ExtenDOS, so it's not a big deal. I just thought I'd try it out."

Robert Schaffner tells Mike:

"Maybe a problem on your scsi chain or trouble with some drivers. Any scsi device should send a message while boot up sequence.

Yamaha Recorders supported by ExtenDOS.

SPIN is an driver for CD-ROM devices.

ExtenDOS is the ONE and ONLY driver i used since 3 years for Toshiba
XM53xx CD-ROM devices and an YAMAHA CDRW 4260. Any other are not need.

CONFIG.SYS from CD-TOOLS / SPIN:

(Use SPIN for read only from Yamaha device!)

(Also works with .xfs for MagiC)

```
; CD-Tool / SPIN Configurationsfile BEGIN
; Note that everything up to '; CD-Tool END' will be erased by
; CD-Tool's configuration tool!
;
; created by CD-Tool 2.08, Sat Jul 12 13:47:20 1997
;
; devices
;
; SCSI 6: 'TOSHIBA CD-ROM XM-4101TA' -> P
; SCSI 3: 'YAMAHA CDRW 4260' -> V
;
; BOS drivers
;Load CD-TOOLS device driver hs-cdrom.bos
*BOS, c:\auto\spin_sd.bos, P:14
*BOS, c:\auto\spin_sd.bos, V:11
;
;Load SPIN device driver spin_sd.bos
; DOS drivers+
;
;Load .BOS device driver for SPIN and CD-TOOLS
*DOS, c:\auto\hs-iso.dos -cl6, P:P
*DOS, c:\auto\hs-iso.dos -cl6, V:V
;
;
; Config.sys           An ascii file that describes the system
configuration.
;

; Physical Basic operating system format
;*BOS, [Physical Bos driver][Arguments], [Physical id]:[DMA channel],
..
;           Device #      meaning
;           0 - 7          ACSI device 0 - 7
;           8 - 15         SCSI device 0 - 7
;
;The next line installs FALCON.BOS for SCSI device 6 (14 = 8 + 6).
;
; Logical DOS format.
;*DOS [Logical DOS] [Arguments], [Logical id]:[physical id],...
;
;The High Sierra driver won't be needed in most cases
;*DOS, C:\AUTO\cd_boot\HSMAY86.DOS, Q:Y
;
;The next line installs ISO9660F.DOS for MetaDOS drive letter Y
;(which has been assigned to SCSI 5 above) as GEMDOS drive R:. Note
;that a lot of applications can't access drive letters beyond P:, so
;you might have to change the drive letter.
```

Try to toggle "Use SCSI DRV routines" on "Advanced options for SCSI" on ExtenDOS 3.3. SPIN and ExtenDOS works fine here since years with different Toshiba CD-ROM and Yamaha Recorders. SPIN is read only!

Different is the hard disc driver. I used HDDriver and not CHBD. I kicked CHBD, AHDI and some other stuff with no support, if i changed from 520 st to falcon."

Lyndon Amsdon tells Mike:

"Hmm, it should work. Have you set all the Config.sys up to right ID and drive letter? I use it on an IDE drive (even though it strictly says that it won't work!)."

Mark Friedman asks about hacking a power supply for his Falcon:

"can anyone give me some info about how to adapt a PS2 or AT power supply so that it will work in a Falcon? My plan is to cut off the connector from the original power supply and connect the wires to the PS2 PSU. But which wires go where? Has any body done this?"

Robert Schaffner tells Mark:

"DOITF030 contains the schematic
<http://www.doitarchive.de>
<http://home.t-online.de/home/rsmac/> "

Mike Freeman tells Mark:

"Yes, I recently did this when my Falcon PSU blew. I use an AT power supply. It's pretty simple, actually. First, de-solder or clip the Falcon's power connector from its power supply, and clip the leads from the AT power supply cable. Solder the red and black leads on the Falcon connector to the red and black leads on the AT unit. The next part is crucial!!! I made a mistake with this one, and ended up blowing a transistor on the motherboard! The colors of the 12v line are different on the Atari and PC power supplies. DO NOT CONNECT BLUE TO BLUE! Connect the blue wire on the Falcon connector to the yellow wire from the AT supply cable. The blue wire on the AT supply cable has the opposite polarity as the Falcon's. Once all the Falcon's connector wires are soldered on, plug it all in, switch it on, and all should work fine!

You should be aware that you will need to re-case the Falcon unless you want the power supply dangling off the back end. Desktoppers and C-Lab MK-X cases aren't even big enough. You'd need to get a PC case and do some hacking. It took some doing, but I (with the help of a couple other Atarians here in town) got my Falcon into a very nice looking mid-tower case. I like it a lot better than the other various case designs I've had, as it's got way more than enough room than I'll ever need, and it's much easier to get into for upgrading, as it's a "screwless" case. It basically just pops open with a firm tug."

Kelly Reed asks about PC emulation:

"I was referred to this newsgroup from the Notator newsgroup. I'm looking for software that will help me resolve a theory. The software needs to run DOS on my Atari. There are many emulators out there to run Atari on PC.. but not many that run PC/DOS on an Atari. If you have this software

please let me know, and provide an *.ftp where I may download this.

The reason for needing this is a theory I have. I have an EMAX II which can upload and download sample banks from PC using a program called EMX. However I run Win 2000 and EMX needs to run from DOS prompt. EMX also uses DS,DD floppy disks only. My PC has an LS 120/HD floppy drive.

So my theory is if I can get my Atari to think like a PC and run Dos every once in a while I will have access to hundreds of sample banks designed specifically for my EMAX."

Lonny Pursell tells Kelly:

"I use SoftPC, you can find it on the net. Never could get serial ports to work, that might be a problem if you try it. It's also painfully slow on my TT."

Bob Retelle adds:

"Well, there WAS a software-only IBM emulator which ran on unmodified STs and which would allow you to boot MS-DOS and run PC applications.

It was a commercial product called "PC-DITTO", and I have no idea what the copyright status may be today, but I doubt it's available freely for download.

If you could locate someone with the original PC-DITTO package for sale, it might be worth a try.

The biggest problem was that the Atari ST is SO SLOW that software emulation is exceptionally painful to watch. However, for your application the speed might be acceptable.

(Later emulation efforts on the ST were hardware based, essentially requiring you to install a circuit board with an 80286 based PC on it inside the ST. The ST turned control over to the PC inside it and became nothing more than a "dumb terminal" offering keyboard and monitor support. These were very expensive and attained only marginal success.)

Does the LS 120 not allow you to use DD floppy disks?

Wouldn't it be possible to boot your PC from an MS-DOS boot disk just to run the EMX utility, then reboot into W2K?

Another thought might be to see if a native Atari patch librarian might be able to access the EMAX directly. I know absolutely nothing about MIDI applications though, so maybe that's a bad idea."

Kelly replies:

"The LS120 reads and writes and formats 720 K floppy but it doesn't except the conversion needed for EMAX ... EMX for some reason. My assumption is that it is too new of a floppy and has some added bonus stuff that gets in the way.

Someone has sent me a version of Sound Designer which I will try and work with directly from my Atari to the EMAX II. As you mentioned use a native program designed for that sort of thing."

Fredric Fouche posts this very interesting (to me) bit of info:

"Ok, here is the deal.

I have:

Strong knowledge of Unix, MiNT, Sparemint, GEM, TOS, a cdrom burner and fast internet access.

Here is what I would like to see:

A cdrom MiNT installation (100% self sufficient), probably to be sold to you guys for a minimum fee. (at least to cover my ass).

Would it be worth it? (especially my time).

I can have a fully functional sparemint install for myself, I am thinking hat it is a shame that only 5% of atari users are able to use this kind of setup, probably because they were the only ones to have anything > than a 520STF, or they just got lucky during the install. Anyway, I would like to see more people enjoying an advanced configuration.

I would like to see a few things in order to make this possible:

1) bootup floppy (containing a cdrom driver (SPIN? Julian Reschke?), an XHDI hd driver (cbhd? hddriver?) and minimum tools to start the installation from the cdrom then.

2) some tech doc writers (2 for english, 1 for french, 1 for german and the more the merrier)

3) some consensus, agreement, e-meetings (irc, email whatever) to keep a strong focus on the project.

4) depending on the price of the cd (to be decided), the real authors (such as F. Naumann, Thomas Binder, Draco etc etc) would be rewarded with money. NOTE: the distribution would be available for free on the web as an ISO image, so if you have time OR fast internet access, it would be 100% free. (reminder, I do NOT do that for the money, i already have a job that pays really well).

5) some artists (graphics, music, etc) and different developers to help in this project are welcome.

6) some beta testers would be needed as well. (MiNT newbies preferred, or magic fanatics would even be better).

This is a BIG project, i totally realize that, big in effort, not in time as we practically have all the pieces of this puzzle, it is just a matter of gathering all that neatly and logically.

Anyway, feel free to post your comments in this very newsgroup. It could be a very interesting project."

Janka Gerhard tells Fredric:

"I got the impression that that's exactly what one needs to be : lucky during the installation. First I had N.AES 1.2, Mint 1.9 ? and GCC 2.8.1. and some thing worked and some won't. When I upgraded to N.AES 2.0 and Mint 1.15.5 I also tried to install GCC 2.95.2 but except for 'hello world' type of program it never worked. rpm I also never got to work. After some weeks of trying I threw everything away and installed the old KGMD and GCC 2.8.1 and somehow I've hit a combination where for the first time everything works really well. The only drawback is that sometimes I look at the sparemint pages and see all the new things that I'm not able to try. So any attempt to create a new package is highly welcome and I'll surely give it a try. "

David Ormand adds:

"YES!!!!

A RedHat-style easy installation for MiNT is Long Overdue.

Well, maybe not THAT easy, but something that has a sufficiently friendly blend between good instruction and automation that MiNT dummies can handle. And an up-to-date selection of kernel and utilities. That work on most/all setups (e.g. my STfm).

I'd buy it. 'Course, I'd rather buy it from ChroMagic or Systems For Tomorrow or some such in the U.S.!"

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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Keeper of the Flame  
by Thomas J. Andrews  
tj@atarinews.org

I've spent the last couple of weeks stepping through the portal leading to the Dark Side. Yes, I now have a PC. Worse yet, it's a Windows PC. I take this step with a great deal of regret. It feels like I'm selling out, but sometimes ya gotta do what ya gotta do.

I blame the Internet. I really do. When Delphi gave up its old dialup access I had to go to the Internet or go offline. My Mega ST (and later Mega STE) works great for email, newsgroups, and telnet, but the Crystal Atari Browser (CAB) comes up short, mostly due to its inability to handle Javascript. I was able to use just enough of the World Wide Web to get a good taste for it, but not enough to fully enjoy it. So, when my brother decided he needed something faster than his IBM Pentium 166, his old machine passed on to me.

I'm now deep in the throes of learning Windows 98. It's a struggle, but I'm getting there. On the plus side, I have two browsers that seem to be able to do about everything, including crash. I'll be able to explore the Wonderful World of Emulators, something I've wondered about for some time. On the minus side, it's not an Atari system. I've already had the thing lock up, only to chastise me when I rebooted for not shutting down properly. My Atari's never did that. Crash, yes, but when I reboot they go on as if nothing had happened.

I haven't given up on Atari yet. Both my Mega STE and 800 are still up and operational, and will remain so for the foreseeable future. In fact, I'm typing this on the Mega STE, because I like the keyboard better than the PC.

#### 8-Bit News

Word is out about a .JPG file viewer for the 8-bit, available for download at <http://rjespino.atari.org> or <http://rjespino.webhop.org>. By all reports it's a great program, well designed and easy to use. It uses the HIP format for display.

I find it very interesting that there's now a jpeg viewer for the Classic Atari. Several years ago I was a beta tester for Jeff Potter's JVIEW, which displays GIF files using his Colrview system. Toward the end of the testing, I asked him at a GENie Real Time Conference about a jpeg viewer. He looked into it and concluded that the translation algorithms required more processor power than was practical for the 8-bit. Well. so much for that. Once again, the hidden power of the 8-bit confounds even the experts.

Those of us who used our Classic Ataris online years ago have fond memories of hours spent on bbs's. With the development of the Internet, those days are gone forever. Or are they? If you're lucky enough to have an ISP that supports a text shell account, you can use a VT100 program like ICE-T or FlickerTerm to telnet to bbs's that are much like those of old.

Everyone even mildly interested in Ataris, 8-bit, TOS/GEM, AtariPC, Portfolio, Lynx, Jaguar - has-beens, still-ares, wannabes - all are welcome to attend the Atarinews Chat, Tuesdays starting at 9:00 pm Eastern US time. The url is <telnet://atarinews.org>. To logon, use "bbs" for both site userid and password. Once in the bbs, new users have to select a bbs userid and password. Then, use "T" (RETURN) and "C" (RETURN). Give yourself a chat id, and you're there! So far, only the chat portion of the bbs is active, but, if enough interest is expressed, the rest of the bbs might be activated.

Other URLs to check out are <telnet://jybolac.dyndns.org:520> and <telnet://shadow.skeleton.org>. The first is brand new and running on an Atari TT030. The second has been around for a while, and the owner has threatened to take it offline if he doesn't get more users.

Now that you know, you have no excuse. Check 'em out!

Atari 8-bit Docs, Hints, and Solutions  
<http://www.crestviewfl.com/~richard/atari-docs.htm>

Do you have an 8-bit game you haven't played in a while because you forgot how? Lost the instructions? Stuck somewhere in a text adventure? Find a cartridge or disk at a garage sale/flea market/swap meet but no docs? If

With over 125 manuals and/or quick references, chances are the docs for your treasure might be right here, ready for download. Most docs are for games, like Castle Wolfenstein, Archon, Bruce Lee, and River Rescue, but there are also non-game docs for programs like AtariWriter, Dos 2.5, Visicalc, and Mac/65. If you're really stuck in an adventure game, the solutions for nearly 50 of them are here. Beware, though. Having a solution can easily ruin the enjoyment of a good adventure.

Unfortunately, the site hasn't been updated since October 1999. There's a link to owner Larry Richardson on the page. Perhaps, if he were offered encouragement and/or doc contributions, he would continue his excellent and valuable 8-bit service.

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Just a year ago, the two leaders of the video game console market were largely unchallenged. Sony had most older gamers under its wing with its

best-selling PlayStation system while Nintendo attracted a younger crowd to the Nintendo 64.

But this year, tech heavyweight Microsoft Corp. is throwing its hat in the ring with the Xbox, the No. 1 software company's first foray into the world of consoles.

The stakes are rising, as video game and hardware sales have grown to a \$6.5 billion industry. Already one player has dropped out of the fray -- Sega Corp., which said earlier this year it would stop making the slow-selling Dreamcast console to focus on game software.

So the challenge for the Xbox is to prove it's a worthy foe for the industry's old-timer Nintendo Co. and Sony Corp.'s PlayStation series.

"Sony has high customer loyalty. Nintendo has brands kids recognize. The Xbox is pretty much an X-factor because they've never published console games," said Richard Oh, research firm NPD TRSTS video games account manager. "They're new and jumping into a console war that someone really good had to drop out of."

All the new consoles are 128-bit systems, offering double the power of the former 64-bit systems. Microsoft comes with a broadband Internet connection, while the other two platforms can access the Internet through separate devices.

Experts say Microsoft's biggest challenge lies in drawing adrenaline-pumping game titles. Nintendo has tried-and-true Mario, Pokemon and Zelda franchises and the PlayStation 2's one-year advance release has lured many of the top titles.

"Xbox has more momentum in terms of excitement and hype, but they have not shown anything that has really excited the early adopters," Electronic Gaming editor-in-chief Ken Hsu said. He gets the "buzz" from hardcore gamers through letters and e-mails from the magazine's half-million readers.

Microsoft has signed up the large game publishing houses -- Electronic Arts Inc., THQ Inc., Activision Inc. and Sega -- to make games for the Xbox. It has also signed up some smaller Japanese developers.

While its \$500 million marketing budget has focused so far on the console's graphics muscle and technological advances, experts say they need to show a line-up of unique games.

"The technology is great, but they need to have exclusive games to make people buy the hardware. They have John Madden and Tony Hawk converted for the Xbox and others, but none of these are exclusive," said UBS Warburg analyst Mike Wallace, referring to two of the top sports game titles.

Microsoft is expecting to launch with 15 to 20 games.

Video gamers are eager to see what the consoles can do at this week's E3 conference, but are more driven by the games that are available for it, Hsu said. "In terms of power, all are about equal and it really comes down to what games (players) are going to get excited about," he said.

In contrast, Nintendo's well-known brands sell themselves, Hsu said. "Nintendo has the best games in the world, most gamers will tell you. They have really strong franchises, so they don't even have to show the games

and people are excited."

Experts say the Nintendo has a strong hold on the younger players, leaving the Xbox and PlayStation 2 fighting over the 18-and-over demographic.

Gamers are eager to see the GameCube, as Nintendo has been very close-mouthed about the system's details.

Launched last March in Japan and in October in the United States, PlayStation 2 has shipped more than 10 million units worldwide, and offers game developers a wider audience than the Xbox and GameCube, due for release this fall.

"I think Sony is certainly going to be a leader because its installed base will be close to 30 million (units) worldwide by March 2002, and by then Nintendo and Microsoft will have sold a couple million each," UBS Warburg's Wallace said.

Unlike movies, sequels of hot video games are usually sure-fire blockbusters, and the PlayStation 2 will feature some of the most anticipated titles before its rivals even unveil their platforms. Coming this summer are sequels to the Tony Hawk Pro Skater series, Final Fantasy, Gran Turismo and Metal Gear Solid.

While analysts say the PlayStation 2 is sitting pretty with its line-up of games and its 18-month headstart, they say the console leader is vulnerable.

Developers have criticized the difficulty of developing games for the system, saying that the logistics developing for the Xbox and GameCube systems have proven easier.

The PlayStation 2 has also been criticized for not having better games at its launch and needs to show off better titles at E3, says Schelley Olhava, senior analyst with market research firm International Data Corp. (IDC).

Sony's hardware shortage problems at the PlayStation 2 U.S. and European launches have continued to plague its roll-out.

"As far as I know, you still can't go out and buy a PlayStation 2 in any store, and I'm not sure when that situation will clear up," Olhava said.

"If Nintendo and Xbox have compelling enough games and are available, that could take sales from Sony," she said.

Some insiders say Sony will likely lower its price once the Xbox and Nintendo GameCube enter the market from its current manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$299. Xbox and GameCube are expected to price similarly, although rumors have circulated that Nintendo could set a price below its rivals.

#### Microsoft Lays Xbox Launch Plans

Microsoft will launch its Xbox video game console on Nov. 8 for \$299, the software giant said on Wednesday, using the crucial holiday season to challenge sector leaders Sony and Nintendo for dominance in the \$6.5 billion industry.

The launch date gives Microsoft just a few weeks to build a buzz around the Xbox before the holiday season, when it needs to make a big splash in the race to catch up to Sony Corp.'s popular PlayStation 2.

Spicing up the race is Nintendo Co. Ltd., which is launching its next-generation GameCube console on November 5.

The PlayStation 2 is also priced at \$299, but some analysts think Sony might lower that soon to better compete with Xbox. Nintendo has not announced GameCube pricing yet, but many in the industry say the machine could be priced at around \$200.

But despite the competition, Redmond, Washington-based Microsoft said it expected to sell from 1 million to 1.5 million Xbox consoles through the holidays.

"Neither one of us (Microsoft and Nintendo) are going to have any trouble selling hardware this holiday season," Robbie Bach, Microsoft's "Chief Xbox Officer", said in an interview at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3), the video game industry's annual trade show.

The Xbox's price tag is in line what analysts had expected. Console makers sell the hardware at a loss, hoping to build a user base quickly and then make profits on the games. A lower price makes the machine a more attractive buy, but means a bigger upfront loss for the company. Conversely, a higher price cuts initial losses but could put off cost-conscious consumers.

The Xbox entry is controversial because analysts wonder if the market can support three different platforms, pointing to the failure this year of Sega Enterprises Ltd.'s Dreamcast machine.

Microsoft plans to back the Xbox with \$500 million in marketing over the first 18 months, making it the company's biggest product launch ever. It expects to have 600,000 to 800,000 units on store shelves for the Nov. 8 launch, Bach said.

Microsoft, which has done virtually no advertising for the Xbox yet, will ramp up marketing for the console over the next few months, and is striking promotional deals with other companies like restaurant chain Taco Bell, Bach said.

Bach touted the game's high-powered hardware, which is based on PC technology, and will let players compete and talk to one another online.

Microsoft boasts the Xbox hardware will outperform both the PlayStation 2 and the GameCube, but analysts said all that power won't do any good unless software developers make great games that are fun to play.

Bach said Microsoft will have about 15 to 20 game titles for the Xbox launch, and it has dozens more lined up for launch in the following months.

Bach demonstrated several games that are expected to be flagship titles for the Xbox.

Featuring realistic water effects, complex shadows and intricate detail, the games include the science fiction action title "Halo", "Munch's Oddysee", the sequel to the popular "Abe's Oddysee" fantasy adventure

series, and "Dead or Alive 3", the latest installment in a series of fighting games.

Microsoft has also lined up exclusive high-profile games, such as ones based on director Steven Spielberg's upcoming summer movie "A.I." about artificial intelligence.

Trying to ensure the Xbox will be a hit in Japan, Microsoft has courted Japanese gamemakers. Among them are Sega and Capcom Co. Ltd., which promised to bring its popular samurai adventure "Onimusha" and dinosaur rampage "Dino Crisis" titles to the Xbox.

Bach said he did not expect the kind of production delays that plagued the PlayStation 2 launch last year.

"The components are all there. We don't expect any bottlenecks. Everything is going really well," Bach said.

Bach also highlighted Microsoft's plans to develop online games for the Xbox, promising players will be able to join an online game with a single click and will be able to talk to each other while playing.

Microsoft's online plans contrast with those of Sony, which on Tuesday announced a deal with AOL Time Warner Inc. to let PlayStation 2 users access the Web, chat and send e-mail using the AOL service.

"All you have to do is ask game players what they want. People don't want to send e-mail from their couch, they don't want to browse from their couch, they want to play games," Bach said in an interview on Tuesday.

"Our online environment is about games, it's not about e-mail, it's not about other things, it's completely and totally focused on games," Bach said.

Nintendo to Launch GameCube on Nov. 5 in U.S.

Ask Nintendo Co. what makes a popular video game and they'll point to their own super stars, Mario, Zelda and Pokemon.

Now the Japanese video game giant intends to add new luster to its all-star line-up, announcing on Wednesday that it will launch its new GameCube video game console in the United States on November 5.

That date sets up a showdown with the new Xbox console to be launched three days later by software giant Microsoft Corp., which is a fresh entrant into the \$6.5 billion gaming industry.

Earlier on Wednesday, Microsoft said the Xbox will go on sale on November 8 for \$299, using the holiday season to challenge industry leaders Nintendo and Sony Corp., whose PlayStation 2 has become the system to beat.

Nintendo announced in April it had postponed the Japanese launch of the GameCube until September 14 to make sure the company had lined up enough hardware and strong software titles. At that time, the company said it was planning a mid-November U.S. launch for its next-generation console which has been in development for two years.

The old-timer in the three-way video game console war, Nintendo showed off a boxy purple GameCube at the annual video game trade show, the Electronic Entertainment Expo, or E3 on Wednesday.

GameCube is scheduled to be launched in Japan on September 14, and at an unspecified date in Europe early next year.

Nintendo actually played only two games on the machine at E3, promising more details at its own show on August 24 in Japan. They said they would announce pricing details and a complete game line-up at an investor meeting on May 24.

But a preview of GameCube's games and characters, and the thunderous applause after each, signaled Nintendo's intent to capitalize on the popular cartoon characters it is known for.

"If you want our world-known names, you can't have them unless you own the Nintendo machine," said Satoru Iwata, Nintendo's director and general manager of corporate planning.

"We believe we know more about what makes a good game than anyone else," Iwata said.

Although Nintendo's device has the same 128-bit capacity as its rivals, the PlayStation 2 and the Xbox, Iwata played down the GameCube technology, saying 3-D graphics are already of TV-quality and will soon reach their limits.

Games Nintendo showed included "Luigi's Mansion" featuring the lesser-known brother of the popular Mario character, "Super Smash Bros.", "Metroid Prime" and a new game called "Pikmin" in which the player controls ant-like creatures.

"We work with design partners to design the GameCube to, above all, eliminate troublesome bottlenecks. The result is a more efficient and gamer-friendly device for E3," Iwata said.

The event was riddled with jokes and gamer humor, in contrast to the Xbox show, which focused on technology and testosterone-fueled games.

But both companies highlighted the ease with which developers can write games for their consoles. Some developers have complained of difficulties in creating games for the PlayStation 2.

Sony is holding its event later on Wednesday. So far, its E3 announcements have centered on how it plans to turn the PlayStation 2 into a home entertainment hub through deals with AOL Time Warner Inc. to provide Internet access, e-mail and chat, and with RealNetworks Inc. to make it capable of receiving video and audio over the Web.

Nintendo executives also said that the Game Boy Advance, its update to its popular handheld gameplayer, had sold 1.6 million units in its past five weeks on sale in Japan and 3.1 million units of software.

The device, which sports a bigger and sharper screen than the Game Boy Color it replaces, is scheduled to go on sale in the United States on June 11.

Peter Main, executive vice president of Nintendo, said that the initial U.S. supply probably won't meet full demand at first but that the game



company plans to produce 24 million units for sale in the first 12 months of release.

### Sony and AOL Join Forces on the Video Game Front

Moving to create a strategic alliance against Microsoft, Sony Computer Entertainment and America Online plan to announce a new relationship on Tuesday aimed at blending the video game and online Internet experience.

The new relationship comes as the video game industry prepares for its annual trade show, where the three major entrants Sony, Nintendo and Microsoft are jostling to capture mind-share from both software developers and consumers. The show begins on Wednesday in Los Angeles.

Underlying the alliance between Sony and AOL Time Warner is a coming collision among the personal computer, online and video game industries that will tend to blur the lines between the different markets in the home.

"Both of these technologies are running into each other pretty hard," said Rob Enderle, a vice president at the Giga Information Group, a market research firm based in Cambridge, Mass. "Sony dominates the game market, but Microsoft has the channel to take it in the future."

In addition to its alliance with AOL, Sony will announce on Tuesday a series of peripherals for the Play Station 2, including an add-on hard disk, network connection, mouse and liquid crystal display that will narrow the gap between its video game machine and the Xbox from Microsoft.

Many analysts have commented on how the Xbox is closely based on the current design of the home PC, with the exception that it has been intentionally crippled so that it will not run the Windows operating system or PC programs written for Windows.

Moving in the opposite direction, the new Sony peripherals for the PlayStation 2 will give it more PC features, meaning that the video game machine will be capable of being moved away from the living room television and into a teenager's bedroom.

"We wanted to expand the market," said Kazuo Hirai, president and chief operating officer of Sony Computer Entertainment.

The two systems are set to go head to head in the United States and Japan this Christmas as Microsoft tries to build a beachhead in the video game business. In addition to its Xbox game machine which is the first entrance by Microsoft into a major computer hardware market the company has been spending heavily to buy video game developers in an effort to ensure that software will be available for its new system this year.

Now Sony and AOL will embark on a competing effort to add AOL features like electronic mail and Instant Messenger chat features to the Sony PlayStation.

At the coming Electronic Entertainment Exposition in Los Angeles, the two companies plan to demonstrate an AOL software program running on the PlayStation. AOL, which owns Netscape, is also developing a version of the Netscape Communicator browser for the PlayStation 2.

"This will be a whole new experience," said Peter Ashkin, chief technology officer of AOL. "Clearly the PlayStation 2 is the premier game platform and we want to focus on broadband networking and entertainment."

There are currently 29 million AOL subscribers and 30 million owners of PlayStation 1 and 2 video game machines, but industry analysts said that Sony and AOL as well as Microsoft were entering uncharted territory in their efforts to force a convergence of the various PC, Internet and video game technologies.

"The biggest thing that's going on in the video game market is there are no new people coming into it," said Nick Donatiello, president of Odyssey, a San Francisco-based consumer market research firm. "Penetration has been unchanged for years and years."

The video game market has reached a plateau at 36 percent of United States households, he said, and it is unclear if new features and improved game play will make a significant difference this Christmas.

In contrast, 43 percent of home PC's are used in some fashion for playing games, he said.

Moreover, Sony and Microsoft must also battle Nintendo, which is planning to bring its own new gaming system into the market this Christmas, while confronting the advent of new consumer technologies like personal video recorders that will compete for consumer dollars at the end of the year.

Capcom's Award-Winning Resident Evil Comes To  
PlayStation 2 Computer Entertainment System In,  
Resident Evil Code: Veronica X

Five Year Anniversary Edition Features the  
'Wesker's Report"

Celebrating five years of publishing Resident Evil products, Capcom, today announced plans to release Resident Evil Code: Veronica X for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system this August. Designed by award-winning Capcom Executive Producer, Shinji Mikami, this special five year anniversary edition will include the "Wesker's Report" and include never-before-seen footage that sheds new light on the mysterious character, Wesker, and reveals insight into the Resident Evil plot line. The product will be a special two DVD set. As an added bonus, consumers will have an opportunity at select retailers to get a playable demo of the highly anticipated upcoming release, Devil May Cry, another Mikami designed masterpiece. The most visually stunning chapter of the Resident Evil saga, Resident Evil Code: Veronica X is an enhanced version of the chart-topping Sega Dreamcast blockbuster, Resident Evil Code: Veronica. The entire blockbuster, multi-platform Resident Evil series has sold more than 18 million units worldwide making the franchise worth more than \$600 million. Resident Evil Code: Veronica X will carry an "M" rating by the Entertainment Software Rating Board.

"Not only is Resident Evil Code: Veronica X the best of the series, the game now returns to its original roots on PlayStation 2, and is further enhanced with the incredible series retrospective in the "Wesker's Report," said Todd Thorson, director of marketing, Capcom Entertainment.

"Brand new footage explains some of the mysteries and insidious plots surrounding the character, Wesker, from the original Resident Evil. If all this weren't enough, the icing on the cake is the playable demo of Capcom's upcoming Devil May Cry, an entirely new gothic thriller from the creator of Resident Evil. Devil May Cry is already one of the most highly anticipated titles for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system."

Resident Evil Code: Veronica X begins as Claire Redfield leaves Raccoon City for Europe, headquarters of Umbrella Corporation, in search of her brother Chris and to solve the mystery surrounding Umbrella Corporation's secretive activities. In her search she is captured and sent to an isolated prison on a desolate Island. While it remains unexplained how Chris, one of the original S.T.A.R.S. team members, appears in Resident Evil Code: Veronica X, players will be reacquainted with his iron will and munitions expertise to seek the truth behind the dreaded Umbrella biotoxins. Resident Evil Code: Veronica X contains never-before-seen footage that focuses on battles between Chris and the enigmatic character, Wesker, and sheds new insight into the ominous Resident Evil story line.

The additional DVD called the 'Wesker's Report' which includes three different sections. The first section is a narrated retrospective of the entire Resident Evil series through the eyes of the infamous super villain, Wesker. Consumers will uncover secret plots that explain various details of Wesker's involvement in the Resident Evil storyline. The second section is a highlight video of the amazing footage from Resident Evil Code Veronica X, setting up the storyline. The final section is an interview with the director and producer of the Resident Evil series as they reveal behind the scene details regarding the creation of the blockbuster series.

In Resident Evil: Code Veronica X players control Claire at the beginning of the game and later assume the role of Chris Redfield in their efforts to stop Umbrella's devious plans. One of the many features that makes Code Veronica different from previous Resident Evil games is the Real World System (R.W.S.). Now when Claire opens doors, solves puzzles, stores items or ammunition, they remain in the same spot when playing the second half of the game as Chris.

"This five year mark is an important milestone in the history of Resident Evil and we are pleased to celebrate it by releasing the best of the series on the PlayStation 2," continued Thorson. "Resident Evil fans continue to hunger for more story information and the Wesker's Report will answer many questions."

In March 1996, Capcom released the original Resident Evil which quickly rose to the top of the charts and established the Survival Horror genre. In 1997, it was honored with the "Consumer's Choice Best PlayStation Game Overall" award from Sony Computer Entertainment America. In January 1998, Capcom released Resident Evil 2 which received top honors from consumers who voted it "Best Overall Title" and "Best Action/Adventure Game" in Sony Computer Entertainment Consumer's Choice Awards. In March 2000, Resident Evil Code: Veronica released and in November 2000, Resident Evil 3 was launched. Personal computer versions of Resident Evil, Resident Evil 2 and Resident Evil 3 are also available.

Capcom Presents, Devil May Cry an Astonishing  
Mikami Masterpiece for the PlayStation 2

Capcom presented Devil May Cry, a new "gothic action" game for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. Designed by Resident Evil creator and mastermind, Shinji Mikami, Devil May Cry tells the story of Dante, the descendent of a legendary swordsman who has waged a one-man battle against the demon world in order to carry out a 2000 year-old revenge. Scheduled to release in November, Devil May Cry is already the most anticipated PlayStation 2 game for fall 2001 in the trade, press and consumer communities, described as a destined-to-be blockbuster release. A playable demo of Devil May Cry will be distributed with the highly anticipated September release of Resident Evil Code: Veronica X. Devil May Cry will carry an "M" rating by the Entertainment Software Rating Board rating.

Devil May Cry boasts the following features:

- \* The quality of game graphics and animation are instantly recognized as far and above all other PlayStation 2 titles.
- \* Shinji Mikami, the original producer and Hideki Kamiya, the original director of Resident Evil 2 are reunited for the first time since the creation of the massive original and Resident Evil 2 blockbuster.
- \* Possesses an incredibly dark and gothic tone with an artistically crafted art style.
- \* Unsurpassed particle effects and light-sourcing set a new standard in video game realism.
- \* Introduces an all-new level of character control allowing amazing depth of character movement.

As the lead character in Devil May Cry, Dante is a dark figure shrouded in mystery. Legend has it that 2000 years ago, in the depths of hell, a demon swordsman, awoke to justice and rebelled against the devil, waging a one-man war in support of the human world. 2000 years later, Dante, a private investigator of the supernatural, realizes that the devil is rallying to rise again against mankind. How does Dante fit into this gothic puzzle? Deep within Dante's blood lies the power of ancient demons and as his power builds he transforms into a demon state where he can inflict unearthly powers on the retched souls he encounters. As Dante continues his adventure he will find powerful weaponry including his dual-pistols and shotguns. Dante will discover powerful swords, each possessing various elemental powers. This devil hunter will lead players into the fantastic dark world as Dante's destiny is played out in a gothic battle of good against evil. If Dante is successful, the Devil May Cry.

As he seeks revenge for the past, Dante will face many evil beings, including:

- \* Demonic marionettes - These low-class demons put their souls into emotionless marionettes. These creatures normally are slow but can move surprisingly fast when attacking humans.
- \* Death - These beings encompass death and are similar to grim reapers. Death beings can hover in the air and travel through walls. They use over-sized scissors or a scythe as their weapons of choice.
- \* Phantom - These high level demons rule all other demons in the old castle. They are huge, ugly creatures that resemble spiders with a dark aura. These creatures are more intelligent than humans and are capable of fierce magic using fire or ground-shaking power.

"Devil May Cry is simply amazing. It will certainly raise the bar in the world of PlayStation 2 games," says Todd Thorson, director of marketing, Capcom Entertainment. "Devil May Cry takes full advantage of the technical advancements of the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system by

delivering stunning graphics and gameplay that immerses gamers into a dark fantasy world. Capcom Executive Producer, Shinji Mikami has created another masterpiece."

Sega Celebrates a Decade of Sonic Mania With the  
Launch of Sonic Adventure 2 for Dreamcast

The True Blue Hero Commemorates His 10th  
Anniversary as Pop-Culture and Video Game Icon

Break out the cake! This June, Sega of America will celebrate the 10th Anniversary of one of the most beloved and recognized video game characters of all time, Sonic The Hedgehog. In honor of the occasion, Sega will bring Sonic back to the Sega Dreamcast video game console with the worldwide launch of "'Sonic Adventure 2," sequel to the top-selling "'Sonic Adventure." More than an icon, Sonic The Hedgehog has starred in Sega's hugely popular ongoing video game series with upwards of 20 million copies in cumulative units sold worldwide over the last ten years. Additionally, Sonic has helped to shape an industry, a culture and to become a mainstream part of family life.

"Over the past 10 years, Sonic has become a household name," said Peter Moore, president and COO, Sega of America. "'Sonic titles have consistently been top-sellers for Sega making this a critical property as we move forward to becoming a worldwide leader in interactive entertainment. We expect 'Sonic mania' to continue, especially as he gets additional exposure on new game platforms this year."

In 1991, gamers first met Sonic The Hedgehog when he was introduced on the Sega Genesis video game console. "'Sonic The Hedgehog" was universally applauded as the first significant contender to Nintendo's "'Mario." The game went on to sell more than 2 million units worldwide that year alone. The next year, its sequel, "'Sonic 2," hit shelves and quickly became a hit, selling 400,000 units in its first five days of availability and earned the status of the top-selling 16-bit video game of all time.

Over the years, Sonic has been featured in more than 11 titles for different Sega gaming platforms, including the massive 60 level "'Sonic 3" for Genesis, "'Sonic 3D Blast" for Sega Saturn, "'Sonic's Schoolhouse" for the PC and the smash hit "'Sonic Adventure" for Dreamcast.

Sega has seen Sonic escalate to celebrity status, with the blue wonder starring in two simultaneous TV animated series, his own comic book (still published today) and as a float in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade -- making Sonic the first video game character to have that honor. In addition, Sonic's image has appeared on everything from lunch boxes, wristwatches and sneakers to Franco-American Pasta.

This year Sonic returns with all-new friends and foes with the release of "'Sonic Adventure 2" for Dreamcast. Created by the highly acclaimed video game developer Yuji Naka, "'Sonic Adventure 2" delivers an all-new "'Hero vs. Villain" theme. The game features visually fresh gameplay environments, including over 30 fast-action gameplay stages, and has a new 2-player mode to compete head-to-head.

This winter, "'Sonic mania" will continue when Sonic The Hedgehog makes his debut on Game Boy Advance with the release of "'Sonic The Hedgehog

Advance" (working title).

#### THQ Announces MotoGP for Game Boy Advance

THQ Inc. announced MotoGP for Nintendo's highly anticipated Game Boy Advance system.

MotoGP, based on Dorna's FIM motorcycle Road Racing World Championship Grand Prix, enjoys a 51-year history and more than 1.5 million trackside spectators. Scheduled for release in fall 2001, MotoGP for Game Boy Advance will offer gamers the latest in biking technology and renowned riders from more than 21 countries.

"Given the capabilities of the Game Boy Advance, we're thrilled to bring the most powerful motorcycles and the world's best riders of MotoGP to the new handheld system," stated Tim Walsh, senior vice president of International publishing, THQ. "We look forward to building an extensive Game Boy Advance library with a wide array of quality games for gamers of all ages."

"We are very pleased with the agreement reached with THQ," commented Carmelo Ezpeleta, chief executive officer, Dorna. "We are proud of having THQ as a partner for a project like this where high technology and quality is imperative."

MotoGP for Game Boy Advance will offer a four-player mode, three classes of races including 125cc, 250cc, 500cc and the excitement of competing against the world's best riders in the most demanding circuits. With 20 real tracks to choose from and five challenging modes of gameplay, MotoGP offers gamers the opportunity to prove their skill on the track through fog, rain and nightfall. Gamers can choose up to 12 customized bikes from manufacturers including Honda, Suzuki, Yamaha and more to create their own racing style.

Dorna, based in Madrid, Spain, controls the world's top motorcycle sports, including Motocross, Supercross and MotoGP. The Dorna Web site is located at <http://www.motograndprix.com>.

#### 3DO Announces Dragon Wars of Might and Magic for PlayStation2

The 3DO Company announced the planned release of the Dragon Wars of Might and Magic game this fall, exclusively for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. The first aerial-based adventure game in the Might and Magic universe will immerse gamers into the exhilarating and awe-inspiring fantasyland of a new hero and dragon character, Cael. The Dragon Wars of Might and Magic game brings to life a compelling story with intriguing character development that takes players to the skies in a world of monsters and magical beings.

The Dragon Wars of Might and Magic game is a heroic story of revenge and redemption. For centuries, the Orcs have enslaved the dragon race in order to extract a powerful substance called Zeenium. This element provides dragons with their primary strength and fire breathing ability. Now the destiny of the entire dragon race hangs in the balance as they edge toward

unequivocal extinction. A young shackled Cael is in the grips of death as he approaches extermination above a molten pit. Fate intervenes as a sprite named Adara helps Cael break free from bondage, allowing him to seek vengeance against the villainous Orc bureaucracy and to fight for the freedom of his brethren.

Utilizing the PlayStation 2 technology, an all-new game engine will create 16 unique and stunningly photo-realistic environments. Addictive and visually spectacular aerial gameplay will provide a rich and entertaining experience for players. Cinema quality FMV (Full Motion Video) sequences seamlessly blend the storyline and missions. To crush his enslavers, Cael can use 32 unique dragon attacks and magical powers to strike against the Orcs. Additionally, Cael can swoop down and grab enemies in his mighty claws, ram objects with his powerful head, or use his crushing jaws to devour foes.

''Dragon Wars creates a sense of empowerment and accomplishment as the gamer explores this compelling new fantasy adventure," says Trip Hawkins, chairman and CEO of The 3DO Company. ''The gripping tale of an underdog hero conquering overwhelming odds will propel the player from one crusade to the next."

The Dragon Wars of Might and Magic game will deliver nonstop excitement with 16 action packed single player and cooperative campaign levels. Giving great depth and variety to the game is its full 3D flight controls with over 20 specialized dragon maneuvers including barrel rolls, loops and other dragon tricks. Six head-to-head multiplayer levels, such as ''Dragon Duel" and ''Feeding Frenzy," offer the consumer unlimited hours of entertainment.

#### THQ Unveils "Dark Summit" for PlayStation 2 and Xbox at Electronic Entertainment Expo

THQ Inc. announced ''Dark Summit", the first ever mission-based snowboarding title, at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in Los Angeles.

The game is scheduled to ship winter 2001 for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system and be among the first wave of titles for the Xbox video game system from Microsoft in fall 2001. ''Dark Summit" will be available for live demonstrations during show hours at THQ's booth, located at #4001, Petree Hall.

Currently in development by Radical Entertainment, Ltd., ''Dark Summit" will allow gamers a completely unique experience, as the only action adventure snowboarding video game with an in-depth story line and mission-based objectives.

''Dark Summit" features a plethora of tactical challenges, from Half Pipe Hero to Backcountry Helicopter. More than 45 mountain-based challenges await on massively sized runs, as players must earn reputation points on the mysterious Mt. Garrick. However, it's going to take every bit of strategy and skill to defeat the formidable Chief O'Leary and reach the summit.

''Dark Summit' is a revolutionary game design in that it's the first snowboarding game to incorporate mission-based objectives and a compelling

story line," said Michael Rubinelli, vice president, product development, THQ. "It combines high-flying, crazy, big air tricks with tactical challenges and a compelling story line to keep gamers hooked from beginning to end, yet it never loses sight of the tight physics and gorgeous graphics you'd expect from a ground breaking Xbox title."

"Dark Summit" takes place on Mt. Garrick, a once quiet and peaceful ski resort where snowboarders have never felt welcome. Chief O'Leary, the resident ranger, has always led the charge against boarders and limited their access to certain sections of the mountain. Now he has mysteriously closed the summit to all boarders and is trying desperately to drive them off the mountain altogether. Gamers will shred, jib and stomp their way toward earning reputation points and unlocking restricted areas of the mountain in order to discover the true secret behind "Dark Summit."

Capcom Announces Maximo: Ghosts to Glory  
Humorous Tale Offers Intense Action and Classic  
Game Play

Capcom, a leading worldwide developer and publisher of console video games, announced Maximo: Ghosts to Glory, an all new 3-D action adventure game for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. In this original creation from Capcom, players control the fate of the gallant hero Maximo who returns home to find his kingdom in shambles. Not only is the countryside filled with hordes of the roaming undead thanks to his once trusted advisor Achilles, but the scoundrel has imprisoned four beautiful sorceresses and forced Maximo's beloved, Sophia to marry him. Maximo must even confront the Grim Reaper himself as Achilles's actions create havoc resounding throughout the underworld. Presented in a playful setting, Maximo must rescue the four sorceresses, restore good to the kingdom, kick Achilles's butt and get back his girl. Maximo: Ghosts to Glory is planned to release for Christmas. It has not yet been rated by the Entertainment Software Rating Board.

Players in Maximo: Ghosts to Glory will enjoy:

- \* More than 40 special abilities, moves and power-ups to discover!
- \* Dynamic Changing Environments -- With Achilles's drill breaking up the land, the game playfields rise, fall, and collapse creating skill based challenges and obstacles.
- \* Progressive Character Customization -- Each player can customize his character with new skills and abilities. A wide variety of skill and weapon upgrades are available as Maximo progresses through the game.
- \* Unique Continue System -- Players must collect spirits to earn 'death coins' that can be used to pay off the Grim Reaper and gain continues.
- \* Full 3D Worlds -- Maximo lives and fights in an expansive, fully realized 3D polygonal world. Level design allows for true 3D movement and interaction.
- \* Art Developed by Famed Artist -- All of the game characters were designed by Susumu Matsushita, one of Japan's leading artists.



- \* Classic Game Play -- Maximo is a return to the classic thinking in game play design. It's simple, fun and highly addictive and can be enjoyed by players of all ages.
- \* Challenge Stages -- Advanced players can gain additional challenge stages, rewarding the player with new game play and added abilities.
- \* Tutorial System -- The action doesn't stop in order to teach new players how to play. Players will be instructed as the game progresses.

Maximo: Ghosts to Glory's dynamically changing and beautifully constructed 3D environment all loaded with creativity and interactivity. The hero's abilities and skills develop as the game advances. Over 40 power ups and special abilities can be found throughout the game. Maximo can use his shield to defend himself or throw it like a weapon. His shield can also be powered up in many ways including everything from attracting lightning to creating tornados. His sword can also be powered up, from a simple increase in size, to calling a meteor storm from the sky, to transforming it into a flaming blade to slice through enemies.

A unique character progression system enables players to customize and upgrade their character with new skills, abilities, and weapons based on player preferences. As Maximo ventures out on his quest, his appearance changes as the game progresses. At different times, Maximo may be outfitted to wear a helmet or earn new armor, be magically transformed into "old man Maximo," "baby Maximo," or even find himself stripped down to his underwear after losing his armor. Inspired by one of Capcom's most heralded series ever, Ghosts'n Goblins, Maximo: Ghosts to Glory players will recognize many features from the classic games. As Maximo progresses through his journey he will encounter familiar looking bone towers, red gargoyles, and if he's not careful, Maximo can even lose his armor as he tries to complete an area with nothing but stylish boxer shorts to keep him warm. The game features intense game play, and also injects a clever sense of humor keeping the game entertaining and light-hearted.

"Maximo: Ghosts to Glory marks true gaming playability at its best in an amazing 3D world. The intent was to create a game that's all about fun," says Todd Thorson, director of marketing, Capcom Entertainment. "It's not often a game comes along with such massive appeal. This is due to a unique combination of amazing development talent, a brilliant musical score, incredible graphics and artwork design from one of Japan's most popular artists. Capcom has spared no expense to create this blockbuster."

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- Online Users Grow! & Purr!

New Gaming Forum!

All,

Gamebits, a new online gaming forum, opened today on the online service Syndicomm - just in time for E3! I, the chief sysop, will be posting live

reports from the show to Gamebits while sysop Larry Tipton handles the home front. A live chat will be held Sunday night at 9:00 PM EDT (6:00 PM PDT) at which all your E3 questions will be answered.

Larry and I both either are or were sysops of video game forums on CompuServe, and are webmasters of our own video game review Internet sites. These years of experience will produce what is sure to be an exciting arena for video game discussions.

Gamebits is a message board, conference area, and file libraries with ASCII interface, in the old tradition of CompuServe, GENie, and Delphi. A web interface will be available within the coming months. The message board is structured to hold conversations on hundreds of different topics, while still being logically organized so you can read and post on what topics interest you. It will be the first place where you can read reviews later posted to <http://www.gamebits.net> and <http://www.tiptonium.com>.

The conference rooms will soon play host to a variety of live games, including not only the Hangman and Mad Libs games that used to be active here (3+ years ago), but also some classic console-based games.

Syndicomm.com is currently available by telnet only, and offers a free ten-day trial. Subscriptions are as little as \$25/quarter (\$8/month) for unlimited access. Subscribe with a credit card and get your first month free with no obligation. See <http://www.syndicomm.com> for more details. When subscribing, please use the signup code GAME.

### Don't Bet Your Cybersavings on Video-Game Spinoffs

Movies have been made from as little as a song title, and some of them were even successful. So why not video games?

In 1938, Johan Huizinga, the Dutch medieval historian, published a speculative essay called "Homo Ludens" literally, "game playing man."

In it, Huizinga examined the generally unquestioned labeling of our species as "Homo sapiens" "intelligent man." Several alternative labels have been put forth by anthropologists and historians: "man the tool maker," "man the builder" and so on. But none of those he had read before quite captured our essential quality, Huizinga maintained. What really distinguishes man from other species, he concluded, is that we spend so much time playing games. And so he characterized our species as "Homo ludens" man the game player. We do seem to enjoy it.

How much time does it take to earn our daily bread? And what do we do with the rest of the time? I recall talking to an anthropologist at the Field Museum in Chicago many years ago, and he estimated that early man spent no more than three or four hours a day satisfying his basic requirements. Judging by the people I've worked with, it's about the same today. Even lions hunt but a few hours, and not every day. What is to be done with the rest of the time? Lions sleep and scratch; we play games. These days we play a lot of video games.

The video game industry has been on the threshold of seizing dominance in entertainment for several years. Ultimately it will. It's inevitable: we play games. For the last couple of years, sales of movie tickets and video games have been in a virtual dead heat (no pun intended). Only books are

holding their own, and that's because most books are nonfiction and not published for entertainment. Looked at from the entertainment aspect: about two decades ago, at the height of the craze, revenues from the Pac-Man game roughly equaled book sales from all United States publishers. The handwriting was on the wall, but it was in the form of zeroes and ones, and some people couldn't read it.

In the 20 years I have been writing about computers and software, I have read numerous articles and editorials predicting the imminent demise of video games. At one point in the early days of personal computing, when games accounted for an overwhelming majority of all software sales, the denunciation rose to a roar. There were critical editorials and articles in all the best places. A fad, they concluded. Continuing strength in game sales has proved to be an irksome reality, and subsequent critical commentary has declined.

Hollywood is moving to the position of "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em." This strategy will fail, and movies will move on into obscurity, a future entertainment category subsidized by taxes and private charity and viewed by a select audience, much like opera and ballet today. They, too, once dominated the entertainment world. There is a fundamental difference between movies and video games: the games are interactive, movies are passive. I don't see any way out of this. There have been several efforts to produce interactive movies, and they have failed miserably. No joystick, no joy. A movie is not a game.

Still, they keep trying; don't go quietly into that good night and all that. Or as Satchel Paige put it: "Don't look back, something might be gaining on you."

In an effort to change the reality that a movie is not a game, on June 15 the hit computer game Tomb Raider will appear as a movie, also called "Tomb Raider." This will be followed on July 11 by the game-based "Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within," which in turn will be followed by "Resident Evil," with more to come.

Best of luck to everyone concerned. So far, only one of the previous six movies based on computer games has ever made a profit. That was "Mortal Kombat," in 1995, which rode the kung fu craze to \$70 million in box office receipts and \$37 million in video rentals. The production cost was about \$20 million, leaving a very respectable profit, even by Hollywood accounting practices.

What is it that prompts movie companies to make films with a track record of one success in six tries? We could say it's stupidity, but it's really the hope of selling tickets. In fact, the numbers must have started dancing through some heads from the first moment: Let's see . . . there were 17 million copies of "Tomb Raider" sold. All the buyers were young guys. If everybody who bought a copy goes to the movie, that'll be 17 million tickets. If they take a date, that'll be 34 million tickets. If they invite a buddy . . . And so on into the daydream world. Before you know it, you've calculated the biggest box office hit of all time and you haven't even finished lunch. What an easy business.

Some movies are made from original scripts, but most are made from other movies, old and new, and then from books and plays. Movies have been made from as little as song titles or paintings, and some of them were even successful. And of course movies have been made from comic books. So why not video games?

Games come with big numbers. Eidos, the British company that produced Tomb Raider, boasts that Tomb Raider is the most successful computer game in history. Though I asked a couple of company representatives, no numbers were forthcoming. The 17 million number for Tomb Raider came from Square-Soft, the maker of Final Fantasy, which says Eidos is living in a, well, fantasy. The most successful computer game in history, Square-Soft says, is its own Final Fantasy, which has sold 30 million copies.

Just how big a video game can be can be seen with a look at the scorecard. At an average price of \$35 a game, the sales for the nine adventures of Final Fantasy come to more than \$1 billion. Version 10 is about to come out and will add more sales. Tomb Raider, even if the lower number is true, works out to well over a half-billion.

A billion dollars is the kind of number that gets attention. At least it gets attention in the front office where the bankers meet. Though a movie ticket admittedly costs less than a video game, no movie has ever come close to a billion dollars in box office sales, and only "Titanic" has topped a half- billion dollars. Of course, if you look at movie series and after all, the games are a series the four episodes of "Star Wars" have taken in \$1.5 billion.

The production cost on "Tomb Raider" is said to be about \$80 million. In addition, it stars Angelina Jolie, the hot item of the moment. If puffed lips, high breasts and lots of attitude can sell tickets to men and there's no reason to believe they can't she will make it or break it. In fact, she does look a bit like the exaggerated cartoon figure of Lara Croft, which made Tomb Raider, the game, a big hit among guys. I've heard that sex sells and who knows? it might be true.

The presence of stars has not made previous video game movies into hits. "Super Mario Brothers," using characters originally created for the Donkey Kong arcade game, starred Bob Hoskins and Dennis Hopper but bombed. The film, which cost \$50 million, barely managed \$21 million at the box office. "Mortal Kombat" starred Christopher Lambert of "Immortal" fame, but it was the chop-sockey action that was the attraction, not Lambert. "Street Fighter," hot off the video game shelves and into theaters in 1994, starred Jean-Claude Van Damme and Raul Julia but had miserable receipts. Of course, none of those guys had Angelina Jolie's talents.

As for "Final Fantasy," Sony Pictures and Square Productions say the budget is more than \$100 million. I think that's a fantasy, given that there are no locations, no sets and no acting costs other than voice-overs, but I'm not privy to the books.

"Final Fantasy" is animation, which puts it under the gun. No animated film, except those aimed at young children, has ever scored big money. This one will put that record to the test. The animation is so realistic that for the first moment you don't realize it's animation. A kind of quirky motion, however, soon clues you in, and hints of its heritage in Japanese cartoons.

Certainly the film has the most realistic animation to date. And famous actors Donald Sutherland, James Woods and Alec Baldwin are the lead voices. I can't help thinking how much better the movie would have been if they had also done the acting. There is a widespread belief that we are nearing a stage in the development of computer-generated figures and motion where live actors will become superfluous. "Final Fantasy" is close to that level now, and viewing the 17- minute preview convinces me that live actors have nothing to worry about. They can not only do it better;

if it really cost more than \$100 million to put this film together, they can do it cheaper.

Ultimately, the success or failure of films based on video games has had little or nothing to do with actors or production costs and everything to do with timing and story.

In that view, "Tomb Raider" could be a winner. It's Indiana Jones with breasts. "Final Fantasy" looks less certain, unless it finds a cult audience. The story is based on the kind of nebulous New Age science in which the world is controlled by spirits and supernatural forces. It's best appreciated by those who have had a frontal lobotomy. The story has no relation to the "Final Fantasy" video game, by the way.

In fact, this story split has been common to almost all video games that were turned into movies. The movie that hewed closest to the original story and action of the game was "Mortal Kombat," and perhaps it is no accident that it is the most successful to date. Video games don't have much of a story, of course, but then again they don't need it: you play them. Homo Ludens.

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A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

#### AOL, Microsoft Brace for All-Out War

One is the irresistible force of computer software, while the other is the immovable object of Internet connectivity and content. Now, Microsoft and AOL, the two giants that stand astride cyberspace, are about to clash in a virtually inevitable war for control over the way you use the Internet.

The winner will earn untold billions of dollars of revenue and will likely determine what your Internet experience will be for at least a decade. The loser, over time, will become marginalized -- a footnote in the history of 21st century Internet development.

For years, AOL and Microsoft shared an uneasy partnership in a deal that allowed the AOL icon to occupy valuable Windows real estate, while Windows came pre-loaded with AOL's client software.

That partnership expired in January, however, and the threat of the advent of Windows XP and of Hailstorm, Microsoft's code name for its new user-centric Web architecture, has turned what was once peaceful coexistence into two enemy camps arming for nothing less than an all-out battle for dominance.

According to Microsoft, Hailstorm technology will allow people to synchronize multiple devices to store information, access the Internet and conduct e-commerce.

Part of the software giant's larger .Net effort, Hailstorm is Microsoft's strategy to make competing Internet service and content providers, like AOL, obsolete.

"Hailstorm pits Microsoft and AOL right up against each other," Gartner Group analyst David Smith told NewsFactor Network. "The relationship between the two companies is very much at stake. I believe Hailstorm has very much to do with that contract expiring."

But even before Hailstorm becomes available to the public in 2002, the October release of Windows XP, the newest version of Microsoft's dominant operating system, will give AOL a taste of what the competition could be like.

Already embedded in XP are an instant messaging application and an improved media player, which strike at the heart of AOL's industry-dominating status, especially with respect to instant messaging.

Windows XP will also sport what Microsoft has called a cleaned-up desktop with few icons. Instead, applications will be found in a reactive menu by accessing the familiar Start button.

Thus, there will be little or no room for other companies to pre-load their applications in Windows XP, complete with a default desktop icon, as AOL has had in earlier Windows versions.

"Microsoft is very much into placement on the desktop as a key asset. It's something that they're using as an opportunity for revenue generation through partnerships and the like," Smith told NewsFactor.

But the issue of the XP desktop may not be as bad for AOL as it first appears, for two reasons.

First, many analysts believe that Internet penetration in the U.S. has reached a saturation point. Thus, most new PCs will typically be replacement machines, and buyers will probably already have accounts with their own Internet service providers.

Second, many of the computers already owned by AOL customers are legacy machines, and will not have the resources to handle an XP upgrade even if people are inclined to install it -- and analysts think that most people will not be.

Both Microsoft and AOL decline to comment on their respective strategies, but neither is keeping its intentions toward the other very secret. For AOL's part, its public response thus far has been to hint about potential illegalities inherent in Microsoft's strategy.

"AOL sees this as a great threat, and they're acting accordingly," Smith said. "For one thing, they're trying to get antitrust regulators all riled up about it."

Privately, however, AOL is considering a number of alternative strategies to combat Microsoft. According to published reports, a document recently circulated among high-level AOL executives laid out several potential action plans, ranging from full cooperation with Microsoft to developing its own alternative operating system.

While the latter possibility seems unlikely, AOL is reportedly close to completing work on a new version of its software, code-named "Taz." Some

analysts think it is possible that Taz will override some Windows XP functions, such as substituting Netscape for Internet Explorer as the default Web browser and replacing Microsoft Messenger with AOL's Instant Messenger client.

In any event, the fight to control the next generation of Internet interactivity promises to be more a software war than a marketing battle. Without external intervention, such as antitrust action, that would seem to give the advantage to Microsoft.

## Microsoft Rivals Turn Up Political Heat

Rivals of software giant Microsoft are turning up the political heat, accusing the company of plotting to monopolize the Internet through its new .Net strategy in the same way that it came to dominate desktops through its software.

ProComp, a group funded by Microsoft competitors, is charging that the Redmond, Washington-based company is planning to use its new Windows XP operating system and .Net strategy to dominate the Web.

The group claims that Microsoft will use its dominant Windows operating system and Internet Explorer browser to force consumers to adopt its .Net Internet platform.

"This is happening under the nose of the Bush administration," Procomp president Mike Pettit told NewsFactor Network.

Pettit said a federal appeals court is still reviewing a landmark antitrust ruling against Microsoft. His group wants the government to seek tough penalties -- more than the "wrist-slap" settlement they fear is in the works.

"Microsoft is continuing in its predatory ways, despite the ruling against its software business," Pettit said.

Antitrust attorneys expect the federal appeals court to overturn a large part of a sweeping lower court ruling against Microsoft, including an order splitting the company in two.

It appears likely that the Justice Department will settle the case, with Microsoft agreeing to a set of restrictions on its future business behavior.

Microsoft is committing much of its resources to the strategy. Chairman Bill Gates on March 19th said the future of the company depends on the outcome of .Net, dubbed Hailstorm by the company.

The company plans to convert its consumer software and some other services, such as online calendars and instant messaging, into fee-based Web services.

Microsoft spokesman Jim Cullinan dismissed ProComp's charges, saying the group is recycling old allegations.

Analysts who cover Microsoft are not very concerned by the group's accusations.

"Microsoft is moving quickly to get in front of the competition," analyst Melissa Eisenstat of CIBC World Markets Corporation told NewsFactor.

"The company is working as hard on this project as it has on anything else in its past."

Rick Sherlun, an analyst with Goldman Sachs, told NewsFactor: "Microsoft will be able to take advantage of 160 million Passport users to launch its initiative, and that is its competitive edge."

Investors also appear to be happy with Microsoft's direction. Its stock is nearing a 52-week high of US\$83 a share, after hitting a low of \$40 at the beginning of the year.

But Procomp persists, saying, "When consumers start Windows XP, they will have one browser, one e-mail product, one media player, one instant-messaging program."

"All of these are tied every which way you can imagine, like a big eight-headed Siamese twin," Pettit said.

Most industry observers think the war of words against Microsoft is being fueled mainly by AOL Time Warner, which is preparing for a battle with the software giant for leadership in Internet services.

Earlier this week, Sony announced a partnership with AOL to provide Net access for its PlayStation 2 game console. The alliance was established in part to help the companies fight their battle against Microsoft's upcoming Xbox game console, and against the .Net initiative.

The Sony-AOL deal will incorporate AOL's Instant Messenger, Netscape Navigator and Net access software into PlayStation 2 in time for holiday shopping.

### Can Spam Ever Be Stopped?

Few things are more annoying than opening your inbox and finding dozens of solicitations for credit cards, weight loss products and other goods and services.

Unfortunately, no national law exists outlawing or regulating spam. Instead, spam is regulated by "a patchwork of state laws of varying degrees of effectiveness," according to Allen Hile, assistant director of the division of marketing practices for the U.S. Federal Trade Commission.

Hile told the E-Commerce Times, "It's difficult for people operating on the Net to follow 50 sets of rules."

The good news is that bills are currently pending in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate that would require companies that send unsolicited, commercial e-mail solicitations to label their spam as such. In addition, the proposed laws would require spammers to provide a valid return e-mail address and a way for consumers to "opt-out" of receiving future mailings.

The proposed laws also would allow the FTC to levy fines against spammers



who violate the law and would allow state attorneys general to take legal action against spammers on behalf of citizens.

Although it appears that progress is being made in the quest for federal anti-spam legislation, as recently as last week several U.S. lawmakers said they were reconsidering their support of the bill sponsored by Heather Wilson (R-New Mexico) because it supposedly will limit the sending of legitimate business correspondence via e-mail.

The spam laws on the books in various U.S. states are "pretty ineffective," John Mozena, co-founder and vice president of the Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial E-Mail (CAUCE), told the E-Commerce Times.

The reason why state laws are so limited is that they have to walk a fine line to avoid violating the interstate commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution, which bars the states from enacting laws that unduly burden business conducted across state lines.

For example, last year, a Washington State Superior Court threw out a spamming case filed by the Washington state attorney general's office against an Oregon man. The state prosecutors had accused Jason Heckel of spamming Washington residents. In the ruling, King County Superior Court Judge Palmer Robinson held that the state's tough anti-spamming law was "unduly restrictive and burdensome" of interstate commerce because it would require Heckel to determine the state in which each e-mail recipient resides.

According to Elaine Rose, senior assistant attorney general for government relations in Washington state, the state has filed an appeal and the appellate court's opinion is expected sometime this summer.

Although state laws have not proven effective against spammers, a sweeping federal law could stop spam, according to experts, because it would allow federal prosecution of spammers and would create a single set of rules. Even if few spammers are actually prosecuted under a federal anti-spamming law, many believe that simply having the law in place would serve as a deterrent.

Jason Catlett, president and chief executive officer of Junkbusters.com, compared the proposed U.S. anti-spam laws to a federal junk-fax law already on the books. The junk-fax law prohibits the sending of unsolicited faxes and authorizes US\$500 penalties for each unsolicited fax sent across state lines.

Mozena said most fax spammers "stopped pretty quickly" after the junk-fax law was passed. The activist also said that spammers -- whom he called the "bottom feeders of the marketing world" -- will only stop sending spam when they have "a hammer over their head."

Effective federal spam legislation, according to Mozena, will send a lot of spammers "looking for a new job right quick."

Unfortunately, the proposed U.S. legislation is not strong enough, according to Mozena and Catlett. Both point to loopholes in the bills that would allow each spammer to send one unsolicited e-mail before an Internet service provider could take action against the spammer.

"A opt-out policy that allows each spammer one free spam is like permitting shoplifters to steal items until each store requests that they cease thieving. It imposes unfair burdens: In both cases, even people who

are not directly victimized incur costs through higher prices," Catlett said in written testimony provided to a U.S. Senate subcommittee last month.

Even the FTC's Hile acknowledged that the pending bills would allow spammers to "take one bite at the apple." However, he said the FTC supports the pending legislation because it is "the best thing we've seen so far."

The Direct Marketing Association (DMA) -- which favors both of the proposed U.S. anti-spamming laws -- says it generally supports measures to crack down on spam e-mails that either provide false information or fail to give consumers a valid way to opt-out of future mailings.

"However, if you send mail to consumers that provides a real opt-out, that's something very different (than spam)," Christina Duffney, the DMA's director of media relations, told the E-Commerce Times. "Legitimate marketers providing a service are falling into the pigeonhole of spam."

Duffney pointed out that the DMA does provide consumers with an easy way to opt-out of receiving mailings from all of DMA's approximately 5,000 members through its e-Mail Preference Service (e-MPS).

Another fatal flaw in the proposed anti-spamming laws, according to many observers, is that they do not allow consumers to sue spammers directly. Instead, if the laws are passed, consumers who have complaints against a spammer will have to rely on government agencies or ISPs to take legal action.

Moreover, Rose said, most law enforcement agencies do not have the resources to handle what could be an avalanche of spam cases.

According to Mozena, law enforcement agencies have "no time to deal with spam" because they are too busy looking for tech-savvy people who can deal with "serious issues like pornography and cyberstalking."

However, Mozena said, many consumers who have received spam would be "more than happy to go after [spammers]" if they had the right to bring a private lawsuit.

#### New Worm Spreads Political Message

The 'Mawanella' e-mail virus-a Kournikova derivant-hits companies worldwide as it draws attention to the cause of Sri Lankan Muslims. But a long-term outbreak looks unlikely.

Hundreds of companies worldwide have fallen prey to another mass-mailing worm created by the virus toolkit that unleashed the AnnaKournikova worm, antivirus companies said Thursday.

Called Mawanella--the name of a Sri Lankan village--the worm carries a Sri Lankan political message, but does no real damage besides clogging networks with e-mail.

The worm has mainly affected companies in Australia and Europe, said Vincent Gullotto, director of the antivirus emergency response team at security company Network Associates.

"We got lots of reports coming in throughout Europe within a two- or three-hour period," he said. "While it's blasted Europe, it's been spotty in the U.S."

In total, Network Associates received more than 100 reports of virus infections from companies worldwide. Clients of Network Associates rival Symantec, the antivirus software maker, submitted a similar number of reports, Symantec said.

The worm comes attached to an e-mail message disguised as a note from a friend or colleague. When opened on a system with Microsoft Outlook installed, the attachment--Mawanella.vbs--sends a copy of itself to every entry in the address book.

After the mass mailing, the virus will bring up a dialog box with the message:

"Mawanella is one of the Sri Lanka's Muslim Village. This brutal incident happened here 2 Moslem Mosques & 100 Shops are burnt. I hat this incident, What about you? I can destroy your computer. I didn't do that because I am a peace-loving citizen."

The message appears on every Windows 9x, NT and 2000 machine infected by the virus, even if Outlook is not installed.

"It's one of the ones that is sociopolitical; I'm not sure if there has ever been one from Sri Lanka, but it's typical," said Vincent Weafer, director of Symantec's antivirus research center. "It is someone who wants to get a message out."

Though the worm has evaded detection through encryption, major antivirus companies now have new definitions available to update customers' antivirus software, and the worm is seemingly already on the ropes.

U.K.-based MessageLabs, which provides e-mail hosting services to more than 500,000 corporate customers, has detected nearly 1,000 copies of the Mawanella worm--far fewer than the almost 23,000 e-mails that hit the system in the first 24 hours when the Homepage worm struck.

"I do expect that this one will have a fairly short life," said Symantec's Weafer.

### Computer Users May Soon Get 3-D Screens

Computer users may soon be able to work on screens with displays that give the appearance of being three dimensional.

The DVI actualdepth monitors, developed by a private New Zealand-based research company Deep Video Imaging, displays images on two physical planes to create a depth of field.

"People have tried like crazy to get the illusion of depth and the closest you can have is wearing (3-D) goggles and standing at a particular position," DVI director Lim Soon Hock said on the sidelines of a news conference to launch the product.

The monitor, which uses multiple layers of liquid crystal display (LCD) screens to create depth, allows users to work across what appears to be a foreground and background seamlessly, without the need for 3-D glasses or specialized software.

"We have not come across anything which comes close to a DVI monitor," Fong Yew Chan, an engineer and business development director for the Singapore government-funded Institute of High Performance Computing told Reuters.

The institute, focused on high-end simulation research, is collaborating with DVI on applications for the monitor.

"There are technological challenges to be overcome before you can have this kind of display (which) not even the LCD manufacturers could overcome so easily," Fong said.

A rainbow effect called moire interference, which occurs when two LCD screens are placed one behind the other, was one problem.

The "window box" effect where the side portion between the two planes can be seen had to be eliminated, along with the reflection of the screens off each other, DVI executive chairman David Hancock said.

The monitors, which are thinner than conventional cathode ray tube displays, are compatible with all operating systems.

DVI has filed for several worldwide patents and spent about US\$3.5 million in research and development.

The company, funded by New Zealand and Singapore capital, will not manufacture the monitors itself, but hopes to license the technology to others.

The company plans to make prototypes for desktop computers by next year. The monitors are currently available as manufacturing modules in different screen sizes.

#### AMD Unleashes 1GHz Mobile Athlon 4

Advanced Micro Devices takes the wraps off its cheekily named Athlon 4 chip-at 850 MHz, 900MHz, 950MHz and 1GHz--and unveils its new mobile Duron processor too. AMD's No. 4 chip makes its PC debut this month in a Compaq Presario laptop. It's a thumb in the eye for Intel, which won't squeeze a Pentium 4 into notebooks until 2002.

Forget the Athlon 2 or 3. Advanced Micro Devices on Monday announced its new 1GHz mobile chip, the Athlon 4.

Presumably, the name change, as earlier reported, comes as a way to better market the chip against Intel's Pentium 4. However, AMD says the name is steeped in Athlon history and is the fourth iteration of the chip.

"This is the fourth Athlon," said Mark de Frere, product-marketing manager in AMD's Computational Products Group.

As to whether it helps AMD compete with Intel, "I'll leave you to make up

your own mind," he said.

Athlon 4 will come in four flavors: 850MHz, 900MHz, 950MHz and 1GHz. Compaq Computer will be the first PC maker to offer the Athlon 4, in a Presario notebook, according to AMD.

There will be no Athlon 2 or 3. However, AMD is expected to begin branding new chips under its Athlon banner with new names, possibly just letters. The company previously bandied about the term Athlon Pro or Professional for Athlon chips aimed at high-performance corporate computers. It later abandoned that name.

"We will tell you what we're going to call the others when we launch them," de Frere said.

The naming scheme will also let AMD claim a partial marketing victory in that its No. 4 chip will appear in notebooks in May. Intel won't squeeze a Pentium 4 into notebooks until the first half of 2002.

Code-named Palomino, the Athlon 4 contains a number of improvements. Most importantly, the chip will consume far less power than current Athlon chips. Though the Athlon 4 is slightly bigger than previous versions of this chip, it consumes 20 percent less power, de Frere said. Desktop Athlon chips right now consume about 60 watts of power, more than the Pentium III or 4. The Athlon 4 chip was designed to consume 24 watts or less, he said.

The chip is similar to a desktop Athlon in that it shares the same Socket A packaging system and cache sizes as well as a 200MHz front-side bus--the data pathway from the chip to system components such as memory. The Athlon 4 also packs AMD's PowerNow technology and 52 new multimedia instructions in the form of Intel's Streaming SIMD Extensions, or SSE1. Those instructions were introduced with the first Pentium III chips to help the chip handle multimedia by breaking data into smaller chunks, which can be processed in parallel.

PowerNow serves to increase notebook battery life by lowering the clock speed and the voltage of the Athlon 4. The technology features an "automatic" mode that continuously varies the chip's clock speed and voltages based on the demands placed on it by applications. The 1GHz Athlon 4 will be able to scale from 500MHz to 1GHz and run at voltages of 1.2V to 1.4V.

Thanks to the enhancements, AMD says Athlon 4 and other Palomino-based chips offer a 15 percent performance gain over previous Athlons running at the same clock speed. This additional gain also gives AMD a wider performance margin over Intel's Pentium 4 chip, the company said.

Much of this extra performance will come from a new Palomino feature: look-ahead cache. A cache serves as a repository for frequently used data. The look-ahead feature allows the cache to recognize patterns and automatically fetch the data needed by the processor. This way, the chip does not have to wait for the data to perform an operation. AMD says this will juice the chip's performance, especially in workstation and server settings.

By ratcheting down the power consumption, AMD will be able to slip the chip into notebooks. The chip will appear in notebooks first, then servers and desktops. Palomino-based Athlons will appear shortly in dual-processor server and workstation configurations.

AMD also announced on Monday a new version of its mobile Duron chip, based on a similar new processor core, code-named Morgan. The new Duron will offer speeds of 800MHz and 850MHz and feature all of the same enhancements as the Athlon 4, but it will have a smaller cache size and therefore will run about 10 percent to 15 percent slower than the Athlon 4.

Processor brand names are a slippery science. Although in the past, Intel and AMD changed brand names when they changed micro architectures, both companies began to more rapidly change brand names to fit different market segments in the late 1990s.

The same basic micro architecture, for instance, was used in the Pentium Pro, Pentium II, Pentium III, Celeron and Xeon. The chips differ in terms of packaging, speed, cache size, bus speed and other features, but share a common computing unit.

Similarly, the K6-2 and K6-III from AMD shared the same core. More often than not, AMD has followed Intel's branding campaigns. AMD, for example, followed Intel in coming out with a budget brand. AMD's Duron chip is a lower cost Athlon and serves a similar purpose as Intel's Celeron.

The Greco-Romanesque Athlon name also echoed the gladiatorial splendor of Celeron and Xeon. Until the name appeared, many expected the chip to be called the K-7.

#### ICANN Approves '.Biz,' '.Info' Domain Plans

The Internet's governing body approved plans on Tuesday to make two new Internet suffixes available, giving Web site owners an alternative to the crowded ".com" top-level domain space.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, known as ICANN, said it had finalized agreements to integrate the domains ".biz" and ".info" into its addressing system.

NeuLevel Inc., of Sterling, Virginia, will restrict .biz addresses to commercial businesses, while Afiliast, a consortium of 18 domain registrars, will make .info available to the general public for any purpose.

ICANN selected seven new domain names to join the likes of .com, .org and .net last November. Agreements with the operators of the remaining five domains -- .aero, .coop, .museum, .name and .pro -- are expected shortly, ICANN said.

ICANN's accreditation means both NeuLevel and Afiliast can begin the process of making addresses available.

Over 1 million .biz addresses have already been "pre-registered," said NeuLevel CEO Doug Armentrout.

"We're really seeing some tremendous demand," he said.

The announcement came one day after ICANN officials met with the Department of Commerce to answer questions about a separate deal with top registrar VeriSign Inc. that would allow VeriSign to maintain control of the lucrative .com domain in exchange for surrendering control of the .net and

.org domains.

The Commerce Department, which has authority to oversee ICANN under its 1988 charter, did not reject or approve the deal, which some lawmakers had criticized as anticompetitive.

But Tuesday's announcement seemed to ease some of the concerns of General Counsel Ted Kassinger, who released a statement praising the deal.

'We congratulate ICANN on this latest progress in introducing competition consistent with maintaining Internet stability," he said.

Both NeuLevel and Afiliias will give trademark holders a chance to discourage "cybersquatting," or the practice of snapping up addresses with the intention of reselling them.

Afiliias will allow trademark holders to reserve their addresses before the registration process begins. NeuLevel will allow trademark holders to file claims on their names and notify applicants if any conflicts emerge. Disputed addresses would be held for 30 days.

Afiliias plans to make its addresses active starting in early August, ICANN said, while NeuLevel's .biz address will be active in October.

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